

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DEPARTMENT
Monthly Report for September 1946

During September, the most significant success in the work of the Industrial Relations Secretary was, as you have no doubt heard about, the changing of the age-old "lily-white" bus drivers classification as clung to by Public Service Coordinated Transport Company, one of the three operating units of Public Service Corporation of New Jersey. Until September 23, 1946, this company had never employed any Negro as a regularly scheduled bus driver. On this date two Negro men were upgraded from jobs as mechanic and garageman respectively.

This success is most directly the result of discussions between your Industrial Relations Secretary and officials of the company, beginning more than eighteen months ago. It marks the first time any agency or individual has ever directly brought about the employment of Negroes at the still controversial point of operator or driver, in a major transportation company in the United States. This success shows that a social agency, an Urban League, can be effective and can produce tangible results in such an important area. It demonstrates the Urban League technique, in a field where other types of techniques (in Philadelphia, Washington, D. C., New York City, and Los Angeles) have also generated racial conflict and were not able to avoid specific actions of physical violence.

We cannot afford to omit this correct interpretation of our work toward changing PSCTC's exclusion of Negroes as bus drivers. Some peculiar newspaper publicity has mentioned a civic group in one instance, and a group of individual "average" citizens, in another instance, as the direct causes of Negroes driving PSCTC buses. Those articles are lies. Your agency is the only agency, committee or group whose representative has directly negotiated this progressive step.

NAT'L URBAN LEAGUE CONG. The Industrial Relations Secretary addressed the National Urban League Annual Conference in St. Louis, on September 27th. Speaking on "The Negro Worker and the White Collar Field", he drove home a fact that has already been picked up for use by others, that regardless of the quantitative employment gains made by Negroes during World War II, the white collar field harbors a qualitative lag in the employment of Negroes". "White collar fields of employment have now become the new front line of the battle for just, fair, and equal employment opportunities for Americans of color". This address was reported and quoted from by the "St. Louis Globe Democrat", the leading St. Louis paper; and your secretary was interviewed by a Reporter from the New York Times.

During a session of the Industrial Secretaries Council, the Industrial Relations Secretary was struck by the remarks of Mr. Hollis Price, President of Leloyne College, who, sitting as a member of closed meeting, stated that among a number of the Leagues he has visited, he has found records kept in a manner unacceptable to the best standards of social work. Mr. Price has been making a study of Urban League Industrial offices, but has not visited the New Jersey Urban League as yet.

Nevertheless, that charge stimulated the grave concern of your Secretary as he thought again about the state of records in the New Jersey Urban League Industrial Relations office. The way records are kept in this office would warrant an excellent rating compared to the records of many other offices known intimately to us. However, if we were called upon specifically for case reports, we could not put our hands on full, up-to-date records of all the services we give. There should be not only case records of each person we give frequent counsel to (particularly wanted by other agencies when servicing the same person),

but there should also be full up-to-date reports of all the educational programs carried on by and in the department.

At present there are records of correspondence and other material that were written as tools for the various programs, but neither time nor help has been available to write up detailed reports of techniques, descriptions of personalities involved, and of successive stages of development. Such reports would be of invaluable service to the whole League movement, as well as for any new worker coming into this agency, needing to learn the community tempo, its personalities, and the past work done in specific areas.

A second important conference discussion that is still entangling your Secretary's thoughts, concerns good public relations. It was emphasized again and again that in Leagues that do not have a full-time public relations worker, each Secretary must be responsible for interpretation of his or her department's work, either through the Executive, the Board, the departmental committee, or through any direct or indirect channel he or she can develop. As a result of these studied answers to a baffling problem, the Industrial Relations Secretary is now planning for this type of help.

IMPORTANT ITEMS Other jobs done included investigating discriminatory counsel being given Negro workers at ODE by a few white supervisors, intended to discourage Negro workers from going to St. Louis with the ODE as it makes the move in sections. A new order resulted, which specifically emphasizes that all workers regardless of race, color, or creed should decide for themselves whether they want to go to St. Louis, and expect equal consideration. Work was continued with the Labor Committee to Combat Intolerance of which your Secretary is a member. Through this committee, the New Jersey Urban League, the Jewish Community Relations Committee, the American Labor Education Service, the state AFofL, and State CIO, are arranging for educational material to be presented to workers in as many plants and union locals as can be reached. The Industrial Relations Secretary was interviewed by a reporter from the Newark Evening News and the Newark Sunday Call about our views and work on Household employment and present discrimination against Negro veterans respectively. As a result of the article concerning the latter, we were asked by the Editor of the Monthly Summary of Events and Trends in Race Relations, the journal of the Social Science Institute, Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee, for a fuller report to be published in that magazine. At a meeting at the Newark office of the National Housing Authority, the Industrial Relations Secretary advised on Negro labor supply and how to relieve some labor problems holding up housing programs in the New York - New Jersey area. Bringing one NHA official, from New York, to the New Jersey Urban League office, opened an opportunity to get help from that agency on our Building Trades Program. Subsequent correspondence has already gone into details of stamping out discrimination against Negro veterans when seeking apprenticeship or on-the-job training in the building trades.

EMPLOYMENT Five significant placements were accomplished, placing Negro stenographers and one Secretary in important downtown offices. Two professional placements were made, and one veteran was placed in a tailoring apprenticeship program. With the Industrial Relations Secretary away a week because of the St. Louis Conference, and with no time for field visits, referrals dropped to a total of eighty-six; seventy females and sixteen males. Twelve persons were given vocational counselling and three counselled about present work.